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Certification of State Register Listing

The Register of Historic Kansas Places includes all Kansas properties nominated to the National Register as well as lower threshold properties which are listed on the state register only.

Property Name: First National Bank Building

Address: 200-208 North Main, Kingman, Kansas 67068

County: Kingman

Legal: Lots 28, 30 and 32

Owner: Mike and Rita Foulk

Address: 210 North Main, Kingman, Kansas 67068

National Register eligible _____

State Register eligible X

This property was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on August 22, 1992.

I hereby certify that this property is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Ramon Foulk
State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

Aug. 28, 1992

The First National Bank Building (c. 1887-1888) is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places for its historical association with the growth and development of Kingman, Kansas and for its architectural significance as a Richardsonian Romanesque commercial building. The building was designed by the Wichita architectural firm of Proudfoot and Bird and constructed by the Kingman builders Rayl Brothers. The building is exceptional in that it has survived as an important example of Proudfoot and Bird's early work.

The First National Bank of Kingman was organized in 1884 and received its charter in 1886. The first officers of the First National Bank of Kingman were R. W. Hodgson, president; E. W. Hinton, vice-president; D. B. Cook, cashier; M. W. Chamness, teller; and W. E. Maynard, secretary.

"When the First National Bank was organized, Kingman and Kingman county was without doubt one of the liveliest little places in Kansas. The city had been organized but a few years and visions of a large metropolis were in the minds of every resident. Railroads were just coming into Kingman and at that time the Wichita and Western had pushed only as far as this city and town boosters believed this would be the big railroad center of the state....In January, 1886, there were 24 French plate glass front brick store buildings, nine of which had been erected the year previous at a cost of \$40,500. General public improvements including school house, churches, residences, business houses, etc., totalled \$400,000....On June 2, 1884, the iron horse of the first railway train neighed into Kingman. The population, which in 1885 totalled 3000, was out to the last man, woman, child and dog to meet the train. Such was Kingman when D. B. Cook and his associates decided to form the First National Bank of Kingman." (Kingman Leader-Courier, 8 May 1936)

"The proprietors of the First National bank have purchased, for \$3500, 25 x 100 feet on the corner of Main street and Avenue "A." (Kingman County Democrat, 5 August 1886)

"On Main street building is no less active. The First National Bank and Messrs. Kelsch and Kimmerle, have let the contract for a handsome three story brick 50 x 102 feet with basement on the east side of Main, corner Avenue A. This block will be by far the most artistic and expensive according to its size of any in the city. The corner room will be occupied by the First National Bank, the next room north will be a store room, the second story will be cut up into offices and the third story will be used for a hall. White magnesium lime stone corners and window caps will be put in. The front of the bank is to be provided with large French plate glass and the floors tiled. Estimated cost \$30,000. The work on this building has been begun, and as soon as the plans and specifications are received from the architect dirt will fly from the basement." (Kingman Leader, 26 May 1887)

Proudfoot and Bird received the commission for the First National Bank of Kingman in 1887 and subsequently received the commission for the Kingman City Hall (NR 1972) in 1888. The selection of a Wichita architectural firm is not surprising in either case. Kingman viewed itself as Wichita's sister city for a time during the real estate boom of the 1880s, and therefore emulating Wichita's appearance was logical.

Proudfoot and Bird were a Wichita based architectural firm who practiced in south central Kansas during the boom years of 1885 to 1890. Proudfoot and Bird are particularly noted for the seventy Richardsonian Romanesque schools, public buildings, commercial structures and residences they designed for Wichita during their five year stay. The firm appears to have designed almost exclusively in the style of Richardson during these years, being the major

proponents of the style. When Wichita's boom ended in 1890, Proudfoot and Bird left Wichita for Salt Lake City, leaving behind a city made rich by the infusion of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. Only nine of the seventy buildings are still standing in Wichita.

Willis Proudfoot (1860-1928) came to Wichita in 1885 from Foster and Liebbe architects in Des Moines, Iowa. The 1886 Wichita City Directory list George Bird (1854-1953) as Proudfoot's partner, coming to Wichita from Philadelphia. The firm appears to have flourished in Salt Lake City and beyond. Proudfoot and Bird accepted a third partner in 1911. As Proudfoot, Bird and Rawson, the firm maintained its headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa.

In The Spirit of H. H. Richardson on the Midland Prairies: Regional Transformations of an Architectural Style, Paul Larson describes the Wichita work of Proudfoot and bird as somewhat antithetical to Richardsonian design tenets. They used Richardsonian devices as a means of giving height and variation to their buildings, reacting against the horizontality of Richardsonian design.

"Proudfoot and Bird found in Richardson a solution for one of the major problems of late Victorian architecture: how to create unified elevator building designs without simply repeating the elements of each story from bottom to top. The commonest solution, for the Chicago School as well as for the neoclassicists, was to sandwich a sequence of identical stories between a raised foundation and an elaborate cornice in a blown-up version of the classical base-shaft-capital formula. Proudfoot and Bird's solution was the far riskier one of composing each story anew, but retaining a vocabulary controlled enough to keep the assembly from fragmenting....they utilized Richardsonian devices both as a means of creating incremental upward transformations and as a discipline for tying the entire composition together. The soaring effects their programs achieved are exhilarating but utterly opposed to the quiet, earth-bound grandeur of Richardson's work." (Larson, p. 39, 1988)

The First National Bank Building was constructed by Rayl Brothers. The company's managing partner, Charles Rayl (1858-1937), came to Kingman in 1878. He was a brick mason by trade, and built most of the brick buildings in Kingman, but in later years established an auto dealership and became a banker. Hance White was the stone mason for the building.

Red St. Louis pressed brick and Ft. Scott limestone were employed for the building's exterior. Hard yellow pine with an oil finish was employed for the building's interior. White and brown marble blocks paved the bank's floor. Large plate glass windows which swung on center hinges fenestrated the first floor, stained glass transoms surmounted these windows. A pressed tin cornice and tin roof were installed. A brick herring bone sidewalk surround the building. Staircases lead to down from the sidewalk to the rooms on the basement level.

The bank continued operations in its Richardsonian Romanesque castle until 1955. The building has received interior and exterior alterations to the first floor, but in general, the second and third stories maintain a high degree of integrity. The brick sidewalk and many of the stairwells were destroyed in 1982, when a concrete sidewalk was poured. The tin roof was replaced in 1992. The alterations to the structure may limit its chances as a National Register property, but it is possible that most of the original features remain underneath more modern treatments.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Bauer, Lonny L. "First National Bank of Kingman." (Nomination draft, 1992).

Kingman County Democrat, 5 August 1886, 9 June 1887, 29 December 1887, 23 February 1888, 17 May 1888.

Kingman Leader, 26 May 1887, 22 September 1887, 27 October 1887, 15 December 1887.

Kingman Leader-Courier, 8 May 1936.

Kingman Weekly News, 6 June 1887, 7 March 1888.

Larson, Paul Clifford, ed. with Susan Brown. The Spirit of H. H. Richardson on the Midland Prairies: Regional Transformations of an Architectural Style. (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, 1988).